



Frederick Forsyth

## Forsyth in deal for Phantom II

MANHATTAN LOCALE

Lloyd Webber also working on sequel to musical

NEW YORK • Novelist Frederick Forsyth has sold U.S., Canadian and audio rights for *The Phantom in Manhattan* to fledgling publisher New Millennium Entertainment.

The sequel to Andrew Lloyd Webber's version of Gaston Leroux's novel *The Phantom of the Opera* takes the eloquent ghoul of the Paris Opera house to the streets of Manhattan some 10 years later.

The book, which New Millennium co-president Michael Viner expects to publish by January, will precede a planned musical production of the sequel, which Lloyd Webber is reportedly working on. Viner also plans an audio version of the book as well as one in DVD format. He valued his deal with Forsyth in the mid-seven-figure range.

The stage project has been rumoured well over a year, with Forsyth, who had threatened never to write another book, telling British publications this past summer he offered his services to Lloyd Webber at a dinner party last December. Forsyth, who has written such political thrillers as *The Day of the Jackal*, was previously published in this country by Bantam (whose British arm Transworld is publishing the book in the U.K.), but he already has a relationship with Viner since his most recent novel *Icon* is under development at New Millennium.

Viner, along with wife and partner Deborah Raffin, formally launched Beverly Hills-based New Millennium earlier this week. They are still caught in legal action with their former company, Dove Entertainment, which they sold to Media Equities International. Dove is seeking to uphold a non-compete clause they signed with their former company. The fracas could prevent them from releasing audio products in the short term, but Viner expects the issue to be resolved in their favor.

Variety

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